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to develop into its rightful supremacy over the animal instincts ; press on with economic reforms, and the morbid practices of the Neo-Malthusians will cease to find even an excuse : this is the author's position. But does not this solution seem very far off, while our problem is one of to-day ? We agree with the author that the Neo-Malthusian suggestions *may* lead to even worse evils than those which they are intended to obviate, and we distrust any solution which does not rest upon slow organic changes of constitution and character. On the other hand, for particular cases we see at present *no* solution but the *pis aller* of Neo-Malthusianism. We doubt if the author has quite realized that there are many Neo-Malthusians whose appreciation of the sanctity of marriage, the responsibility of parentage, and the fundamental, ethical, and social importance of the family, is quite as strong and clear as his. Neo-Malthusian methods *may* become loop-holes for lasciviousness ; but so may the most conventional marriages. It appears to us certain that there are many cases where it is *in every conceivable way* better for a married couple not to have more than two or three children, and we cannot believe that this restriction can be attained by continence except in a very small percentage of cases. Neo-Malthusian methods *may* lead to an abyss of immorality, but they may also be consistent with and conducive to a high-toned morality, —everything depending upon the ethical pitch of the whole life.

J. A. THOMSON.

EDINBURGH.

STUDIES IN LITTLE KNOWN SUBJECTS. By C. E. Plumptre. London : Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1898.

This book is a reprint of various Essays that Mr. Plumptre has published during the last thirteen years. The Essays are quite detached. The author divides them into Studies in Times Past and Studies in Times Present. The best Essays in the first division are the two upon Bruno. The writer is very appreciative of the great Italian philosopher, and very severe upon a Scottish reviewer who had devoted two articles in the *Scottish Review* of 1888 to an onslaught upon Bruno. Mr. Plumptre, however, does not manage to throw any fresh light on Bruno's philosophy. He deals rather with Bruno as a man. The position of Plumptre in this respect seems good as against that of the Scottish reviewer who represents Bruno as a worthless "creature." The Essays in the second part deal with more popular subjects, such as the Progress of Japan,

Thackeray's Letters, Charles Bradlaugh, etc. The author's observations are a little trite. For example, he discourses on the duty of being true to our convictions, on the advantages of looking on the best side of things, and so on. Every one knows all these things. The difficulty lies in carrying them out in practice. But doubtless there is no harm in reminding people of them. The author, it may be noted, is very agnostic.

W. F. TROTTER.

EDINBURGH.

FOOTSTEPS IN HUMAN PROGRESS, SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS: A Short Series of Letters to a Friend. By James Samuelson. 8vo. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1898. Pp. 113.

Mr. Samuelson seeks to show that the course of civilization, in spite of its many apparently devious and deeply shadowed turns and twists, has been "slowly but surely towards a far distant goal designed and prepared for the human race by a higher Intelligence." The book might be described as a series of concrete illustrations of the theological doctrine of Providence, or of the philosophical doctrine of the rationality of history. After reading the genial chapters, one feels sorry to be unable to accept the author's protest that he is not optimistic.

J. A. T.

COMMUNISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION. By Karl Kanbsky. Translated by G. L. and E. P. Milliken. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 16 shillings.

This volume, which originally formed part of "Geschichte des Socialismus," deals with the history of heretical communism. In it the history and customs of the Bohemian Brethren, the Taborites, and the Anabaptists are described at considerable length. The descriptions bear evidence of much learning and research; the book is full of curious information, and the events which are related in it have been little known or studied, although they have no unimportant bearing on many problems and theories of the present time. Unfortunately, the style of the author does not do justice to his material; if what he has to say interests the reader, it is in spite of the way in which it is said.

Throughout the book Herr Kanbsky sets himself to prove that the popular representation of the period has up to the present time been a false one. For example, he says, "according to the usual popular representation of history, the only question at issue